

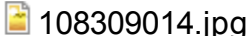


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Republicans move to block health care funding

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 [108309014.jpg](#) House Republicans on Tuesday said they will attempt to block funding for President Obama's health care reforms in this year's budget. The move would come next week when the House takes up a bill to fund the federal government through September, the end of the fiscal year, according to House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va.

The language to block funding of the reforms won't be included in the main body of the funding bill, but will be offered as amendments, possibly from Rep. Dennis Rehberg, R-Mont. Cantor said Rehberg wants to add language "that we do away with funding for the Obamacare bill."

Republicans, with a 24-seat majority in the House, are expected to easily pass such an amendment. Just last month, they voted unanimously, with the help of three Democrats, to repeal the entire health care law. That repeal was blocked by the Democratic Senate.

"I expect to see, one way or the other, the product coming out of the House to speak to that and to preclude any funding to be used for that," Cantor said.

Neither Cantor nor Rehberg provided specifics about what kind of amendment or amendments will be offered. They could block funding for the reforms over the next seven months or, going further, could prohibit federal agencies from taking any steps at all to implement the law -- a move that would be far more disruptive to Obama's program in future years when insurance subsidies and health care exchanges are scheduled to begin.

A bill that blocks funding for the remainder of the year "isn't going to have any real huge impact," unless it includes language specifically prohibiting federal workers from acting to implement the law, said Mike Tanner, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

Karen Davenport, director of health policy at the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank, said the funding shortage will hurt implementation.

"I think it's going to impact their ability to move forward on things like developing the rules for the exchanges and for all the different investments that the bill needs to be making in terms of developing the health care work force and infrastructure," Davenport said.

A House bill that simply blocks funding for the law for the final seven months of the year could, in fact, pass the Senate, as it did last December, even though Democrats control the majority,

Tanner said. But Democrats will never endorse a more strongly worded amendment blocking implementation.

"Republicans are ignoring the will of the American people instead of focusing on jobs, they are focused on protecting big insurance companies with policies that would increase the deficit, cost seniors more for prescription drugs, and put insurance companies in charge of your health care," Reid spokesman Jon Summers told The Washington Examiner.

The two parties are already dueling over the funding bill because Republicans aim to slash \$32 billion by reducing spending to 2008 levels.

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